

## Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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O 221146Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9689

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T DAMASCUS 6396

EXDIS

DEPARTMENT PASS SECRETARY'S PARTY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SY, LE

SUBJECT: KHADDAM COMMENTS ON LEBANON

1. SUMMARY: ACCORDING KHADDAM, TAIF QUADRIPARTITE MEETING POSTPONED SINE DIE AFTER LAST MINUTE EGYPTIAN REQUEST FOR ADDITION OF SARKIS AND PALESTINIANS. SYRIA WORKING TO INSURE SEPT 23 INAUGURATION OF SARKIS. EGYPT CONTINUES HELP JUMBLATT AND LEFTISTS. FOUR THOUSAND IRAQI FIGHTERS NOW IN LEBANON. CHTAURA CONFERENCE DEADLOCKED WHEN ARAFAT UNABLE DELIVER PLO. END SUMMARY

2. IN SEPT 22 MEETING I ASKED FORMIN KHADDAO WHAT BEARING

HE FELT DETERIORATION OF THE POLITICAL AND MILITARY SITUATION IN BEIRUT OVER THE PAST 24 HOURS WOULD HAVE ON THE PROPOSED SYRO-EGYPTIAN MEETINGS IN TAIF AS WELL AS ON THE INAUGURATION OF SARKIS.

3. FONMIN REPLIED THAT HE WAS PESSIMISTIC OVER LATEST DEVELOPMENTS. THE TAIF MEETING HAD BEEN POSTPONED SINE DIE.

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BUT, HE CLARIFIED, ITS POSTPONEMENT HAD BEEN CAUSED BY A LAST

MINUTE CONDITION SET BY CAIRO RATHER THAN BY BEIRUT FIGHTING. MEETING HAD BEEN SCHEDULED FOR SEPT 22 AND WAS TO BE RESTRICTED TO EGYPT, SYRIA, SAUDIA ARABIA AND KUWAIT. LAST NIGHT DAMASCUS HAD BEEN SURPRISED BY NEWS THAT CAIRO HAD ASKED THAT PARTICIPATION BE BROADENED TO INCLUDE SARKIS AND "THE PALESTINIANS." HE PERSONALLY ATTRIBUTED THE RENEWED INTENSITY OF FIGHTING IN LEBANON TO THE DECISION BY "JUMBLATT AND HIS ALLIES" TO ESCALATE THE FIGHTING AFTER THEY FIRST HEARD OF THE PROPOSED TAIF MEETING, IN AN EFFORT TO FRUSTRATE ANY SUCCESSFUL OUTCOME OF THAT CONFERENCE.

4. SARKIS INSTALLATION: SYRIA WAS DEPLOYING ALL ITS EFFORTS TO INSURE THAT SARKIS' INAUGURATION OCCURS ON SCHEDULE TOMORROW--SEPT 23. HE NOTED THAT CHAMOUN HAD STATED YESTERDAY IT WOULD BE UNCONSTITUTIONAL FOR THE CEREMONY TO OCCUR OUTSIDE OF BEIRUT. SYRIA HAS, HOWEVER, SENT A MESSENGER TO CHAMOUN TO (#)

KHADDAM, WAS CONFIDENT THAT CHAMOUN WOULD AGREE.

5. DISCUSSING THE RECENT PROCESSION OF LEBANESE POLITICAL PERSONALITIES TO CAIRO, KHADDAM REITERATED THAT DAMASCUS HAD ACTIVELY ENCOURAGED ALL THESE VISITS. THE LEBANESE HAD TOLD SYRIANS THAT THEIR PRINCIPAL OBJECTIVES WERE TO IMPROVE SYRO-EGYPTIAN RELATIONS AND TO EXPLAIN THE DANGERS INHERENT IN CONTINUATION OF RECENT EGYPTIAN POLICY IN THE LEBANON. IT HAD BEEN THE LEBANESE WHO ORIGINALLY PROPOSED THE QUADRIPARTITE MEETING IN TAIF. "UNFORTUNATELY, IT NOW APPEARS THAT EGYPT WANTS TO CONTINUE ITS GAME IN LEBANON." SYRIA COULD NOT UNDERSTAND EGYPTIAN MOTIVATIONS BEHIND ITS SUPPORT FOR JUMBLATT AND HIS PARTISANS. EGYPT WAS GIVING DIRECT ASSISTANCE THROUGH SUCH MEASURES AS PERMITTING IRAQI FIGHTERS TO TRANSIT CAIRO FROM BAGHDAD TO LEBANON. KHADDAM ESTIMATED THAT UP TO 4,000 IRAQIS ARE NOW IN LEBANON; 400 OF THESE HAD ARRIVED IN ONE SHIP AT SIDON PORT FROM EGYPT DURING THE PAST TWO WEEKS.

6. CHTAURA CONFERENCE: KHADDAM SAID THA THE SEPT 17  
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SESSION AT CHTAURA BETWEEN SARKIS, ARAFAT AND JAMIL HAD BEEN ENCOURAGING BUT SYRIAN HOPES FOR CONTINUED PROGRESS WERE DASHED IN THE SUBSEQUENT SEPT 19 MEETING. ON SEPT 17 ARAFAT HAD AGREED IN PRINCIPLE TO A NUMBER OF SPECIFIC SUGGESTIONS BY SARKIS BUT STATED HE MUST REFER THEM TO HIS FELLOW PALESTINIAN LEADERS. THE SARKIS SUGGESTIONS HAD INCLUDED MAKING TANGIBLE MOVEMENT TOWARDS IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CAIRO ACCORDS WITHIN TWO WEEKS. ON SEPT 19 ARAFAT RETURNED TO SAY HE WAS NOT AUTHORIZED TO

ACCEPT SARKIS' SUGGESTIONS.

7. ARAFAT, ACCORDING TO KHADDAM, IN TURN ASKED FOR A CEASE-FIRE TO BE FOLLOWED BY CREATION OF A COMMISSION TO EXAMINE ALL OTHER PROBLEMS. SARKIS HAD INSISTED ON AGREEMENT ON A COMPREHENSIVE SOLUTION OF WHICH THE CEASE-FIRE WOULD FORM A PART. AS FAR AS SYRIA WAS CONCERNED, ARAFAT'S PROPOSAL WAS AN EFFORT TO "DILUTE THE WHOLE ISSUE" AND TO PLAY FOR TIME.

8. KHADDAM WOULD NOT BE DRAWN OUT ON WHATEVER PLANS SYRIANS MAY HAVE FOR MILITARY OPERATIONS SHOULD THE PRESENT POLITICAL STALEMATE CONTINUE.  
MURPHY

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED SECRETARY'S PARTY.

DAMASCUS 6396 (#)OMISSION IN PARA 4. CORRECTION TO FOLLOW.

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